

000 powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

• 17 This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

[History of Haiti in 17th - 18th centuries - The Haitian white population]

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI 45

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." "So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap François," and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published."

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[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries]

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Some of these charges may be reviewed. One, frequently met with and already mentioned, concerns the general lack of cleanliness and sanitation that marks the cities. As has been shown, this stems directly from the patterns of life which prevailed under French control. The matter of personal morals is also often discussed with anything but praise for Haitian custom. Quite aside from the polygamous tradition of Africa, the influence of which will be discussed later, it is only necessary to recall the example set for these slaves by the sex customs of the Créoles and other Europeans with whom they came into contact to see how the ideal of monogamic union would not be entirely convincing as one to be followed in all its implications. The failure of the Catholic Church to stamp out the African cults in Haiti, and the skepticism with which, as will be pointed out, the motivation of the priests is regarded by the Haitians must have been strengthened by the tradition of the misbehavior of those who were in charge of the religion into which baptism was mandatory, before the days of freedom.

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The instability of Haitian political life, and the venality of judges and other officials have been stressed again and again in the writings of those who have passed judgment on Haiti. Yet one need but read of the readiness of the white colonists to revolt against the authority set over them by the mother country," and of the manner in which during the French Revolution attempts to alleviate the position of the colored and Negro portions of the population were thwarted by the illegal political activities of the plantation slave-owners," to understand at least some of the sources from which direct political action derives its sanctions. One need similarly but read comments in letters and books of the time concerning the corruption of the officials of the colony " to conclude that, since her independence, Haiti has in such respects but continued a tradition set by the rulers who governed the country before the Republic was established. Thus if the life of the Haitian

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WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI 47

Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or instability, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done. 17 66 105

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence. 178 105

WORKING THE AMALGAM

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"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." 17

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Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

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continuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns—in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example²⁸—yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,²⁹ tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.³⁰ On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.³¹ Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,³² but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.³³ In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress."

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.²² What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,²³ there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.²⁴ But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.²⁵ Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.²⁶ In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.²⁷ During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it" — though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not if a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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● 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

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[554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife" — the woman who is addressed as "Madame" — holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

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[583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the aesthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

158 while even the hypothesis of an inherited racial psychosis is proposed to account for the phenomenon.

Let us examine these suggestions. An appeal to the natural environment offers but unsure ground, since it is known that not all peoples who live in the tropics experience a comparable psychic strain. Again, if the participation in *vodun* rites and the experience of possession were given as a reason for lack of stability, it would be expected that these changes in behavior would only occur before, during, or shortly after the ceremonies themselves, something that is by no means the case; and, moreover, that this state of "living on nerves" would be shared by all Negro peoples among whom the experience of possession is the commonplace that it is in Haitian peasant religion. This brings us to the suggestion that Haitian mentality may be the product of a racial psychosis. Here it is important to stress that from the point of view of Haitian culture, as from that of Africa, possession as a part of religious experience is both normal and desirable, so that the actions of an individual in such a state are to be judged neurotic only on the basis of standards that are those of a foreign culture. Add to this the fact that it is becoming more and more apparent that skepticism is the only scientifically admissible attitude when the question of referring the behavior of any people to specific racial endowment is raised, and the necessity becomes apparent of seeking other explanations for Haitian psychology than those that have been advanced.

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17 What, then, of this matter of "living on the nerves"? It is an arresting image for the characteristic instability of attitude and emotional expression found in the Haitian, but in attempting to understand the phenomenon, it would seem that we are on the firmest ground when we look to those historical forces which were considered in the first chapters of this book. Stated in general terms, an explanation might be sought in the influences which cultures in contact bring to bear upon the

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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence*, since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

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into other parts of the New World. Consequently a knowledge of the strains which came to Haiti, of the manner in which they met the situation they found there, and of how the cultural influences that played upon them have worked out in terms of patterns of behavior, should throw light on the way in which American Negroes have met, and are meeting, their own social situation.

Thus the study of Haiti offers contributions of particular value in examining the nature and accuracy of underlying attitudes held toward Negroes by non-Negroes, and the attitudes of Negroes toward themselves. One example is the widespread belief about the quality of the cultures from which the slaves were drawn. This holds that the African peoples who contributed the slave populations to the New World were "savages" whose civilizations were of a lower order than that to which the slaves were introduced. Obviously this view is a natural by-product of European ethnocentrism, but its many repetitions have persuaded the Negroes to accept it completely. Nevertheless, the material in the preceding chapters shows that this concept is anything but valid; that the regions of Africa from which slaves were derived comprise the area where the high cultures of the continent existed, where complex social and political organizations and high forms of religion and art were and are to be found; that their rank, if cultures can be ranked, would rather be with Europe of the Middle Ages than with the most simple societies of non-literate folk. In addition, investigation into Haitian history has pointed out that of these populations it was not necessarily the deficient who made up the slave cargoes. Despite the widespread acceptance of this notion — among Negroes, again, no less than among whites — it has been seen that a considerable proportion of the slaves were upper-class Africans; that at the very least the slave population represented an adequate cross-section of the societies from which its members were derived.²

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Another deep-lying source of the attitude taken toward the Negro concerns his supposed readiness to suffer his slave status. To find the assertion that the Negro is a born servitor, best adapted to caring for those of a higher order in the biological world, it is not necessary to search among the statements of those who, before the Civil War, issued variations on this theme in support of their position. Yet otherwise why did the Negro accept his slave status to the extent to which he did? And, further, just how great was that acceptance? Again, in analyzing the material from Haiti, light is thrown on both questions. Slavery as an institution was one of the few patterns of his new life that rang familiar to past experience, for, as has been seen, slavery—and not necessarily household slavery, but that of the plantation variety which prevailed in the New World—was deeply ingrained in African tradition. Even then, once in the New World, certainly in Haiti and to a far greater extent than is ordinarily grasped elsewhere in the region where slaving prevailed, his acquiescence in his new status was but briefly held, if at all. The tale of slave revolts, beginning but a few years after the original introduction of slaves into Hispaniola and continuing there and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Guianas, and North and South America until the abolition of slavery, has yet to be told. When it is realized that these rebellions were intermittent throughout the period and took place everywhere in the region; that they resulted in freedom for the Maroons of Jamaica and for the slaves who escaped from the plantations of Haiti before the French were expelled from the island, and in the eventual attainment of independence by the Haitians and, *de facto*, by the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana; and that everywhere they held the white population in terror of life and property, the significance of these episodes as pointing the error of current concepts concerning the inner make-up of the Negro is patent. Add to this the revolts of slaves in the barracoons of Africa itself, and on board the ships which

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brought them to the New World — "revolt insurance" was often carried by the masters of slave-ships — and the demonstration of the falsity of this concept of the Negro as a born slave is complete. 567

These ideas, however, are fundamental to the Negro problem as it exists at the present time. Admittedly, it is no simple matter to change points of view so generally held, especially when to the weight of economic drives is added the force exerted by the depth in tradition at which they lie. Nevertheless, when current attempts to solve the "Negro problem" come to mind, one is struck by the slight attention paid to such factors as these. Simple solutions, rapid in their operation, are almost invariably sought and inevitably rejected when immediate resolution of the difficulty is not forthcoming. Does it perhaps occur, again pointing lessons derived from the Haitian material, that there are forces of unrecognized power at work which derive from the elementary fact not only that, as has been stated, cultures in contact influence one another, but that in contact they exhibit far greater tenacity than is ordinarily credited them? 568

The cultural heritage of the African, it has been seen, was not a negligible one. In the entire area from which Africans were drawn it was of sufficient unity so that the differences between the behavior of peoples was but a gloss on the deeper resemblances between their traditions. The slaves were brought to the New World, North America as elsewhere, in great numbers, so that many persons from the same tribes remained in contact with each other. Even though this were not the case, no insuperable linguistic barriers existed. For as with cultures, so with languages; though mutually unintelligible, they were so based on the same grammatical constructions, and so presented the same idiomatic expressions, that the language of the masters spoken in the old patterns sufficed to preserve and hand on the traditions of the forefathers.

What of the belief in the United States that nothing of

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people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.¹ A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.²

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambarras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsman and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, non-material things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

¹ The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P.349, Category 116: Analyst]
² [For foot note, see Category 116, P. 349--Analyst]

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6 *The Making of the Haitian*

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And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,³ the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

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The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired
3 [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. p. 349, Category
116. -- Analyst]

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and hardened and ready to deal with the French, the Spanish, and the English in battle or in politics. They were no longer slaves struggling to cope with a new and strange system. Little by little, imperceptibly they had become true Haitians. 17
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THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were “reconstituted yeomen,” whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

197 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado
which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and
items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane
which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from
Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls,
are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—
hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow
topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the
practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or
American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one
is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
and vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for
19 most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the
urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in
origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French,
parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of
postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify
Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Termi-
nology shows much the same; for example, animal names and ana-
tomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods
carry names of African provenience.

177 The “mixing” of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian.
All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and
gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in